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MESSAGE OF THE PRESIDENT.

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT, March 12, 1862.

To the Senate and

House of Representatives :

I transmit, herewith, to the Congress, the official report of Col. William B. Taliaferro, of the action at Carrock's Ford, July 13, 1861.

JEFFERSON DAVIS.



LETTER FROM THE SECRETARY OF WAR.

CONFEDERATE STATES OF AMERICA, WAR DEP'T., }
Richmond, March 10, 1862. }

To His Excellency the President :

SIR : I have the honor to transmit, herewith, for the information of Congress, an official copy of the report of Col. Wm. B. Taliaferro, of the action at Carrock's Ford on the 13th day of July, 1861.

Very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

J. P. BENJAMIN,
Secretary of War.



OFFICIAL REPORT OF THE ACTION AT CAR-
ROCK'S FORD, JULY 13, 1861, COL. WILLIAM
B. TALIAFERRO, TWENTY-THIRD VIRGINIA
VOLUNTEERS, COMMANDING.

MONTEREY, VA., August 10, 1861.

To Brigadier-General H. R. Jackson, Com'g Monterey line :

GENERAL: As no report has been required of me by the officer (Col. Ramsey of the first Regiment Georgia Volunteers) who succeeded to the command of Gen. Garnett's forces on the death of that officer, of the action at Car-rock's Ford, at which my regiment, with a section of artillery, were engaged with the enemy, beg, in justice to the officers and men who were with me, to make to you a brief report.

On the evening of 12th of July, Gen. Garnett bivouacked at Kalar's Ford, on Cheat River, the rear of his command being about two miles back on Pleasant Run.

On the morning of 13th July, the command was put in motion about 8 o'clock—the 37th Virginia, Col. Jackson's regiment, and Lieut. Colonel Hansborough's battalion, with a section of artillery under Capt. Shumaker, and a squadron of cavalry under Capt. Smith, forming the advance; then the baggage train, and then Col. Ramsey's First Georgia and the 23d Virginia regiment, constituting, with Lieut. Lanier's section of artillery and a cavalry force under Capt. Jackson, the rear of the command. Before the wagon train, which was very much impeded by the condition of the country roads over which it had to pass—rendered very bad by the heavy rains of the preceding night—had crossed the first ford half a mile above Kalar's, the cavalry scouts reported that the enemy were close upon our rear with a very large force of infantry, well supported by cavalry and artillery. The first Georgia regiment was immediately ordered to take position across the meadow on the river side, and hold the enemy in check until the train had passed the river, and then to retire behind the 23d Virginia regiment, which was ordered to take position and defend the train

until the Georgia troops had formed again in some defensible position. By the time the Georgian's had crossed the river, and before some of the companies of that regiment, who were thrown out to ambuscade the enemy could be brought over, the enemy appeared in sight of our troops, and immediately commenced firing upon them. This was briskly returned by the Georgia regiment, who, after some rounds, retired in obedience to the orders received.

The 23d Virginia and the artillery were halted about three-quarters of a mile below the crossing, and were ordered to occupy a hill commanding the valley through which the enemy would have to approach, and a wood which commanded the road. This position they held until the Georgia regiment was formed some distance in advance; then the former command retired and again re-formed in advance of the Georgians. This system of retiring upon eligible positions for defence, admirably selected by Capt. Corley, Adjutant General to Gen. Garnett, was pursued without any loss on either side, a few random shots only reaching us until we reached Carrock's Ford, three and a half miles from Kalar's. This is a deep ford, rendered deeper than usual by the rains, and here some of the wagons became stalled in the river and had to be abandoned.

The enemy were now close upon the rear, which consisted of the 23d regiment and the artillery, and as soon as this command had crossed, Capt. Corley ordered me to occupy the high bank on the right of the ford with my regiment and the artillery. On the right this position was protected by a fence, on the left only by low bushes, but the hill commanded the ford and the approach to it by the road, and was admirably selected for a defence. In a few minutes the skirmishers of the enemy were seen running along the opposite bank, which was low and skirted by a few trees, and were at first taken for the Georgians, who were known to have been cut off, but we were soon undeceived, and a hearty cheer for President Davis having been given by Lieut. Washington, C. S. A., reiterated with a simultaneous shout by the whole command, we opened upon the enemy.

The enemy replied to us with a heavy fire from their infantry and artillery. We could discover that a large force was brought to attack us, but our continued and well directed fire kept them from crossing the river, and twice we succeeded in driving them back some distance from the ford.

They again, however, came up with a heavy force and renewed the fight. The fire of their artillery was entirely ineffective, although their shot and shell were thrown very rapidly, but they all flew over our heads without any damage, except bringing the limbs of trees down upon us. The working of our three guns under Lieuts. Lanier, Washington and Brown was admirable, and the effect upon the enemy very destructive. We could witness the telling effect of almost every shot.

After continuing the fight until nearly every cartridge had been expended, and until the artillery had been withdrawn by Gen'l Garnett's orders, and as no part of his command was within sight or supporting distance, as far as I could discover, nor, as I afterwards ascertained, within four miles of me, I ordered the regiment to retire. I was induced, moreover, to do this, as I believed the enemy were making an effort to turn our flanks, and without support it would have been impossible to have held the position, and as already near thirty of my men had been killed and wounded. The dead and severely wounded we had to leave upon the field, but retired in perfect order—the officers and men manifesting decided reluctance at being withdrawn. After marching half a mile, I was met by Col. Starke, Gen'l Garnett's aid, who directed me to move on with my regiment to the next ford, a short distance in advance, where I would overtake General Garnett.

On the further side of this ford I met Gen'l Garnett, who directed me to halt my regiment around the turn of the road, some hundred and fifty yards off, and to detail for him ten good riflemen, remarking to me, "This is a good place behind this drift wood to post skirmishers." I halted the regiment as ordered, but from the difficulty of determining who were the best shots, I ordered Capt. Tompkins to report to the General with his whole company. The General, however, would not permit them to remain; but, after selecting ten men under Lt. Depriest, ordered the company back to the regiment.

By General Garnett's orders, conveyed by Col. Starke, I posted with that officer three of my companies on a high bluff, overlooking the river; but finding the undergrowth so thick that the approach of the enemy could not be well observed, they were withdrawn.

A few minutes after these companies rejoined the regiment, Col. Starke rode up and said that Gen'l Garnett di-

rected me to march as rapidly as I could and overtake the main body. In a few minutes afterwards, Lt. Depriest reported to me that General Garnett had been killed.

He fell just as he gave the order to the skirmishers to retire, and one of them was killed by his side.

It gives me pleasure to bear testimony to the coolness and spirit displayed by officers and men in this affair. Lieutenant-Colonel Crenshaw and Major Pendleton set an example of courage and gallantry to the command, and the company of officers behaved admirably, doing their whole duty. It would be invidious, when all behaved so well, to distinguish between them.

The gallantry of Lt. Washington was conspicuous. After the six pounder rifled piece had been disabled, and it was discovered that it had to be abandoned, he spiked it under a heavy fire. It is not my province, perhaps, in this report to speak of officers outside of my own command, but I trust I shall be pardoned for bearing testimony to the coolness and judgment that characterized the conduct of Col. Starke and Capt. Corley during the whole of this day, and afterwards on the march. These officers, but more particularly the latter, selected every position at which our troops made a stand, and we were never driven from one of them.

The loss to the enemy in this action must have been very great, as they had from their own account three regiments engaged; and the people in the neighborhood, whom I have seen since, report a heavy loss, which they state the enemy endeavored to conceal by transporting the dead and wounded back to Bealington in covered wagons, permitting no one to approach them. After receiving the order of General Garnett, I marched my regiment four miles further on to Parson's Ford, a half mile beyond which I overtook the main body of our troops, who had been halted there by General Garnett, and which had been drawn up to receive the enemy. The enemy did not advance to this Ford, and after halting for some time, our whole command moved forward, and marching all night on the road leading up the line of Horse Shoe Run, reached about daylight the Red House in Maryland, a point on the Northwestern Turnpike, near West Union. At this last place a large force of the enemy, under Gen'l Hill, were concentrated. This body did not attack us, and we moved the same day into Virginia as far as Greenland, in Hardy County.

After seven days arduous march, we reached this place.

I have not thought it proper to give any detailed account of the march of our troops, either before or after the action at Carrock's Ford. I subjoin a list of killed and wounded in that action.

I have the honor to be,

Very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

(Signed,)

WM. B. TALIAFERRO,

Col. Comd'g 23d Regt. Va. Vols.

(Official:)

JNO. WITHERS,

A. A. General.

A. & I. G. O.,

March 6, '62.

LIST of Killed and Wounded of 23d Regiment Virginia Volunteers, at Carrock's Ford.

	Name of Company.	Name of Captain.	Name of Killed.	Name of Wounded.
Co. A	Louisa Rifles,	B. J. Walton,	None.	None.
" B	Amelia Grays,	J. E. Perkinson,	T. B. Walthall,	J. B. Walke,
" "	" "	" "	" "	Jas. Walke,
" C	Amelia Rifles,	A. V. Scott,	G. W. Lockett,	T. Hastings,
" D	Louisa Grays,	W. J. Sargeant,	J. T. Meeks,	J. C. Sanford,
" E	Brooklyn Grays,	Wm. Haynes,	H. H. Haygood,	P. P. Vass,
" F	Goochland Grays,	W. F. Harrison,	" "	Serg't Moody,
" G	Fred'ks Hall Grays,	C. G. Coleman, Jr.,	I H. Mason,	Wm. Smith,
" H	Rich Sharp Shooters,	R. A. Tompkins,	S. Phillips,	O. O. Beazley,
" I	Central Guards,	J. P. Fitzgerald,	Serg't Venable,	H. Edmunds,
" "	" "	" "	Irby King,	T. W. Cone,
" "	" "	" "	J. Foster,	D. Lacy,
" "	" "	" "	J. Carter,	L. Hines,
" "	" "	" "	E. Collins,	B. A. Womack.
" K	Keysville Guards,	S. T. Walton,	C. Mahoney,	T. Sock,
" "	" "	" "	R. Orsborne,	G. Crenshaw.

(Official:)

JNO. WITHERS,
A. A. General.

A. & I. G. O.

March 6, '62.



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